

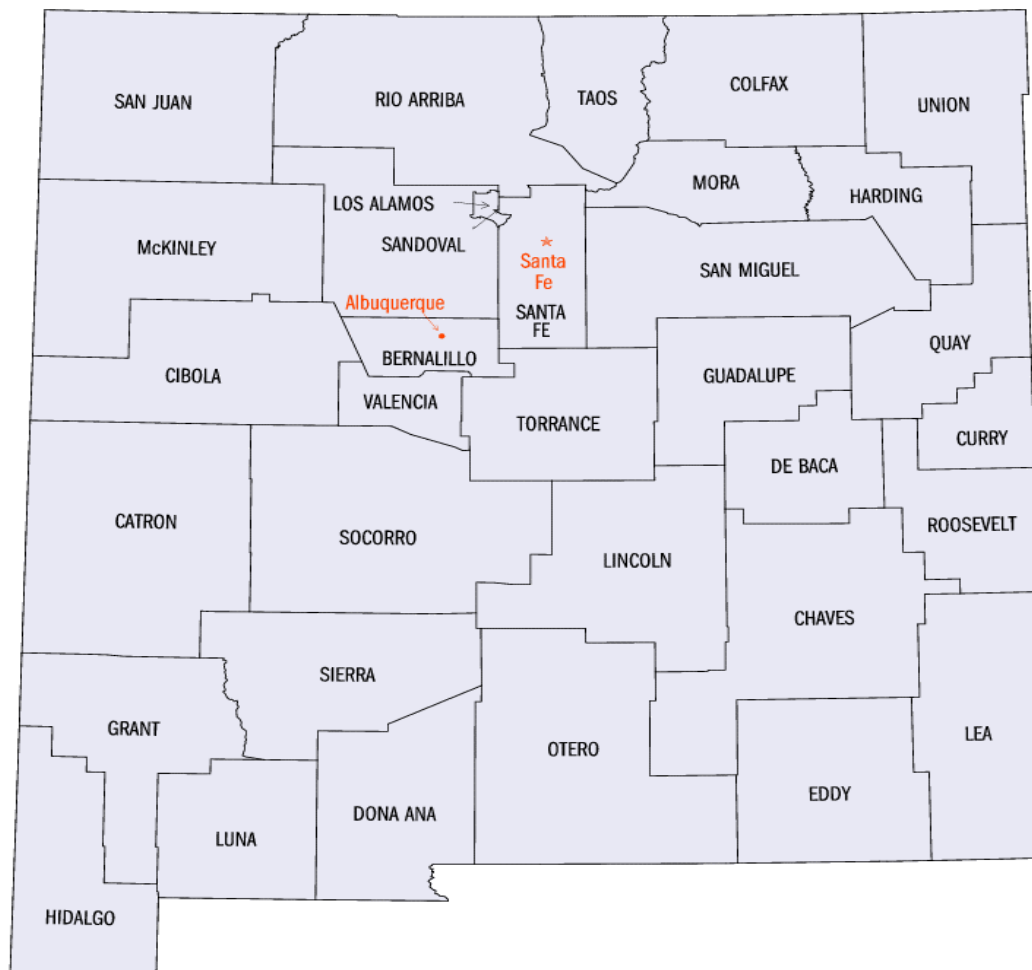
Office of National Drug Control Policy

Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse

Las Cruces, New Mexico

Profile of Drug Indicators

March 2002



ONDCP Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse staff compiled this profile by using the most recent data available from open sources. The data presented are as accurate as the sources from which they were drawn. The information contained in this profile should not be used to rank or compare States or jurisdictions, due to differences in data collection and reporting methods.

Las Cruces

The following profile contains information on demographics, political figures, programs, crime, drug use, drug trafficking, and enforcement statistics.

Demographics¹

- Population (2000 Census): 74,267
- Race/Ethnicity (2000 Census): 72.0% white; 2.4% black/African American; 1.8% American Indian/Alaska Native; 1.2% Asian; 22.5% other; 4.3% two or more races; 53.9% Hispanic origin
- County: Dona Ana

Politics²

- Mayor: Ruben Smith
- City Council (Districts 1-6, respectively): Jose Frietze, Bill Mattiace, Dolores Archuleta, Steven Trowbridge, Wesley Strain, Ken Miyagishima
- Chief of Police: Bill Baker
- Sheriff, Dona Ana County: Juan Hernandez

Programs/Initiatives

- High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)³
Designated in 1990, the Southwest Border HIDTA/New Mexico Partnership is responsible for thirteen counties, including Dona Ana. In addition to these thirteen counties, the New Mexico Partnership region also encompasses four ports of entry and approximately 180 miles of international border shared with Mexico.
- Executive Office for Weed and Seed⁴
The Mesquite Street Neighborhood of Las Cruces has been designated an official Weed and Seed site. The boundaries for this target area are Lohman on the south, Madrid St. on the north, Main St. on the west (which includes the downtown mall), and Solano on the east.
- FY 2001 Drug-Free Communities grantees in Las Cruces who were awarded funding by ONDCP in conjunction with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP):⁵
 - \$100,000 to the City of Las Cruces/Weed and Seed Steering Committee
 - \$100,000 to Southern New Mexico Human Development, Inc./BIG Council

Drugs⁶

- Cocaine
The importation, distribution, and consumption of powder and crack cocaine are the biggest threats in the New Mexico Partnership (HIDTA) region.
- Heroin
The availability of Mexican black tar heroin continues to increase throughout New Mexico. Brown and white heroin have also been encountered in the State.
- Marijuana
Mexican marijuana is the most prevalent drug abused in the New Mexico Partnership (HIDTA) region.

- Methamphetamine
The availability of methamphetamine from Mexico, California, and also produced locally is increasing rapidly.

Crime and Drug-Related Crime⁷

- There were nearly 5,000 larceny-theft offenses known to the police in Las Cruces during 2000.

Number of Offenses Known to Police, Las Cruces, 2000

Offense Type	Number
Murder/non-negligent manslaughter	7
Forcible rape	56
Robbery	93
Aggravated assault	304
Burglary	1,190
Larceny-theft	4,944
Motor vehicle theft	171
Arson	10

Enforcement

- Southwest Border HIDTA/New Mexico Partnership initiatives include the following:⁸
 - New Mexico DEA HIDTA Task Force: With task forces located in Las Cruces and Albuquerque, this initiative focuses on interdiction and investigation of major, secondary, and local drug trafficking organizations impacting New Mexico and other areas in the United States.
 - Regional Interagency Drug Task Force: This collocated, multi-agency task force conducts interdictions and investigations targeting local and international drug trafficking and money laundering organizations in Dona Ana County.
 - New Mexico Border Operations Task Force: Three multi-agency task forces located in separate cities systematically target, investigate and prosecute drug traffickers and money launderers, utilizing intelligence, investigation, and interdictions. These task forces target ports-of-entry, Border Patrol checkpoints, and land border areas.
- As of October 31, 2000, there were 202 full-time law enforcement employees working in Las Cruces. 139 of these employees were officers, while the remainder were civilians.⁹

Trafficking and Seizures¹⁰

- Las Cruces is 45 miles north of the Mexican border.
- Dona Ana County is the direct corridor used for the movement of drugs from the Juarez/El Paso area through New Mexico.
- Most of the New Mexico/Mexico border area is open desert, barren and generally uninhabited offering drug smugglers easy access into the United States and to major interstate highways. Also, the areas between the ports of entry offer favorable conditions of smuggling alternatives.

- Drug traffickers are increasingly exploiting the NAFTA provisions, which brought about significant increases in commercial trade.
- Freight trains and commercial motor vehicle carriers which cross the Texas/New Mexico and Mexican borders, travel through New Mexico and are frequently used by major Mexican drug trafficking organizations to transport drugs into the United States.

Courts¹¹

- As of January 17, 2002, there were four drug courts in Las Cruces that have been in existence for over two years. There is also a family drug court being planned in this city.

Consequences of Use¹²

- During 2000, the New Mexico Office of the Medical Investigator reported 16 drug caused deaths in Dona Ana County.

Sources

¹ U.S. Census Bureau Web site: <http://www.census.gov>

² Las Cruces Web site: <http://www.las-cruces.org/>

³ High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Web site: <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/enforce/hidta.html>

⁴ Las Cruces Police Department, Weed and Seed Web site: <http://www.las-cruces.org/police/weed-seed.htm>

⁵ Drug-Free Communities Web site, New Mexico section: <http://ojdp.ncjrs.org/dfcs/states/nm.html>

⁶ High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Web site, Southwest Border HIDTA/New Mexico Partnership Fact Sheet: <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/enforce/hidta/nmex-fs.html>

⁷ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, 2000*, October 2001: <http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/00cius.htm>

⁸ High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Web site, Southwest Border HIDTA/New Mexico Partnership Fact Sheet: <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/enforce/hidta/nmex-fs.html>

⁹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, 2000*, October 2001: <http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/00cius.htm>

¹⁰ High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Web site, Southwest Border HIDTA/New Mexico Partnership Fact Sheet: <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/enforce/hidta/nmex-fs.html>

¹¹ OJP Drug Court Clearinghouse and Technical Assistance Project, *Summary of Drug Court Activity by State and County*, January 17, 2002: <http://www.american.edu/spa/justice/publications/drgchart2k.pdf>

¹² New Mexico Office of the Medical Investigator, *Annual Report 2000*: <http://omi.unm.edu/00AR.pdf>

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